Program Evaluation Unit

Evaluation and Accountability Branch

Program Evaluation Report

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Workplace-Based Training Program Evaluation

June 1997

Acknowledgments

This evaluation of the Workplace-Based Training Program was prepared by Universalia Group under contract to the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. Tuan Bui was the Senior Consultant for Universalia.

The Ministry of Education, Skills and Training would like to thank everyone who participated in this review. The participation was invaluable to the evaluation.

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Executive Summary

Background

The B.C. Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (MoEST) initiated the Workplace Based Training (WBT) Program, a Youth Works/Welfare to Work employability program, to provided income assistance recipients (IARs) with training and long-term employment opportunities. The program was first introduced in 1994 as a series of pilot and prototype projects (Phase 1 and 2). Full implementation of the program (Phase 3) began in November 1996 with five broker contracts for 3,651 placements.

Purpose Of Evaluation

This report presents an outcomes-focused evaluation of the program's first three phases in the areas of program delivery and impact, primarily for the current program phase, taking into account the experience of the program prototypes. In addition, the evaluation team was requested to evaluate other related program issues such as program policy, design and operations.

Conclusions

WBT Models: Overview

WBT models have been developed from the pilots and prototypes. Under the current WBT program, there are four different models being used, each of which is developed and serviced by one of the brokers and is delivered by a range of sub-contracted delivery agents under contact to the brokers.

In summary, the WBT brokerage models have a number of important positive characteristics to date:

- trends indicate that these models will achieve their targeted number of placements
- WBT brokers are able to provide a range of services for employers including:
  - recruitment and matching of IARs with appropriate employers
  - facilitation of preparation of IARs for employment where appropriate
  - facilitation of development and implementation of a training plan for IARs
  - provision of support to IARs during their year long placement
- WBT brokers are able to identify and contact potential employers in a variety of ways, using a generally flexible approach that is appropriate for different geographic and sectoral areas in British Columbia

Prototype Phase

The Prototype phase placed 1115 clients, exceeding its target by approximately 10%. As of September 1996, 83% of these placements were still employed.

Brokerage Model Phase

Overall, even though Phase 3 (the Brokerage Model Phase) of the WBT program is only approximately one third completed, a number of achievements have been realized to date:

- 1,796 clients (or almost half of the overall placement targets of 3,651) have been placed as of May 31, 1997. Current trends indicate that overall placement targets can be met.
- Clients are being placed across the range of occupational categories and industries.
- Salaries range from $7.00 per hour to $26.00 per hour.

- Clients are acquiring marketable skills.
- The program meets employers' needs by providing pre-screened, candidates with positive attitudes and work ethics, who can be trained in required skills.
- All jobs offer training that lets clients earn an income while they improve their skills.
- 250 existing employees from participating employers were being trained.
- Program support for pre-employment needs is adequate.

Recommendations

There are a range of issues related to the current phase of the WBT program that should be addressed/resolved in the future within the following three timeframes:

- in the immediate future
- at the time of the next broker contract negotiation
- in the longer term

Immediate Future:

- Equity placement results are, in some cases, below targets, and measures to address this should be monitored closely. Standard reporting guidelines for reporting equity group clients should be developed.
- The number of and reasons for non-completions should be tracked by brokers.
- Follow-up surveys of IAR clients should be conducted to assess the degree of participant attachment to the workplace.
- A common definition of job readiness should be used.
- Full-time employment should continue to be the focus of the WBT program, but full-time work and part-time work leading to full-time work should be clearly defined.
- Adequate resources should be devoted at MoEST headquarters and regions to manage the WBT program policy and interface issues. This can be achieved by:
    - Development of a revised WBT Policy Manual;
    - Provision of an integrated program framework that can link to all employability program facets for the benefit of the client, Ministries staff, and brokers;
    - Development of an effective Ministry data collection methodology to capture data from brokers electronically;
    - Consistent commitment to all components of employability programs, from intake through to WBT provision, at all Ministry levels; and
    - Improved linkages between the Regional Management Committees and the Provincial Management Committee.
- Extension of the 4-month eligibility rule for WBT for the balance of the brokers' placements.

Next Contract Negotiation:

- Resources for provision skill assessment of WBT participants should be built into every WBT model.

- Increased resources for client support (touchback, coaching, and up-front training) should be accommodated in the next set of contracts.
- A new eligibility rule (i.e. time on IA) for WBT program participants should be negotiated.
- Overhead costs should be reviewed and clearly defined, particularly those related to client recruitment, to determine the appropriate level of overhead costs required.

Longer Term:

- Contract and commission-based work should be examined for consideration in this program or in other more appropriate programs.
- Placements in part-time and seasonal employment should be considered in specific rural areas where significant numbers of job opportunities fall into this category of employment.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Evaluation

The Workplace Based Training (WBT) program is a Youth Works/Welfare to Work (YW/WtW) employability program delivered by the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (MoEST). The program was first introduced in 1994 through a series of pilot and prototype projects (Phases 1 and 2). The program is currently in its third phase (regional brokerage delivery model), and the MoEST has requested an outcomes-focused evaluation of the program prior to further expansion of the program. This document is the final report of the evaluation.

1.2 WBT Program Objectives

The three major objectives of the WBT program are:

1. To assist employment-ready YW/WtW clients to form a long-term labour force attachment through the provision of on-the-job training,
2. To upgrade the work related skills of members of the existing workforce, and
3. To contribute to the development of a training culture and human resource development capability within the employer community.

WBT is a critical element in the overall complement of BC Benefits programs because it places Income Assistance Recipients (IARs) into long-term employment, thereby reducing income assistance expenditures.

1.3 Program Description

The WBT program intervention involves a one-year work experience opportunity combined with a mix of formal and on-the-job workplace training for IARs selected for the program. The current WBT program is based on a regional brokerage delivery model in which the program is delivered by five broker agencies (see Technical Report for a list of the regional brokers). Brokers are contracted by the MoEST Headquarters office and are responsible for marketing the program to employers, recruiting clients to the program, and working with employers to develop training plans for clients once they are hired.

In this third phase of the WBT program, participants may take advantage of relevant up-front training, prior to their being hired, and of special program supports and assistance for items such as bus fares, haircuts and clothing.

The WBT program is currently restricted to those IARs who have been on IA for more than four months. Client target groups have been established for youth (brokers must make an effort to ensure that 50% of total placements are for clients aged between 19 and 24) and other equity groups.

Employers receive a Training Credit to offset the costs of training a new IAR employee. The training may include formal and in-house training. To ensure that the in-house training is not used to subsidize wages, employers may only claim up to 25% of the total training credit to offset supervisors' wages for the training that they provide to IAR employees. The training credit may also be split 50/50 between the IAR training and training for existing employees, however, at least 50% of the training credit must be

expended upon the IAR. The amount of the training credit available to employers varies from $3,000 to $4,000, as employees in some sectors will require more training than in others. In the brokerage delivery model, the maximum total cost is $6,500 per IAR.

The prototype phase of the program underwent a formative evaluation in spring 1996. On the basis of that evaluation, the program based on the Brokerage Model was expanded in the regional implementation phase during the fall of 1996. A full description of the program is found in the Technical Report.

1.4 Evaluation Objectives

The objective of the evaluation was to provide an outcomes-focused evaluation of the program in the areas of program delivery and impact, primarily for the current program phase, taking into account the experience of the program prototypes.

In addition, during the development of the interview protocols, the Evaluation Team and MoEST staff added evaluation questions related to three additional areas: program policy, design and operations. The Evaluation Team was requested to evaluate a series of specific research questions in these areas. (The team was asked not to consider the area of program cost effectiveness, the data for which is being generated and analyzed by staff at the MoEST and MHR.)

1.5 Organization of the Report

This report is organized into five sections. Section 2 provides an overview of the evaluation methodology and limitations. Section 3 presents evaluation findings and conclusions related to the questions defined in the evaluation framework. Section 4 presents findings on additional issues identified in the course of the evaluation. The final section provides a summary conclusion and recommendations.

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Overview

This section presents an overview of the evaluation methodology; a more detailed description is found in the Evaluation Technical Report which accompanies this document.

The evaluation design called for a number of activities to be undertaken in four distinct phases.

- **Phase 1 - Start up and design**
  - The Evaluation Team reviewed the initial evaluation framework provided by MoEST and met with MoEST staff and a Treasury Board Analyst to discuss the questions and indicators in more depth. As a result, the framework was enhanced and refined.
- **Phase 2 - Data collection**
  - Data was collected by the Evaluation Team, based on the data sources agreed upon in the evaluation framework. The team reviewed existing relevant project documents (e.g. Brokerage Model contracts, policy documents, guidelines, etc.) and available reports (e.g. monthly regional, quarterly headquarters and monthly financial reports). Data missing from incomplete reports was collected by telephone, fax and e-mail directly from the brokers concerned.
  - Interviews were conducted, using protocols approved by the contract manager, with 5 brokers, 15 employers and 5 regional MoEST office staff.
- **Phase 3 - Data Analysis**
  - Descriptive statistics were developed, based on data extracted from existing reports.
  - Major themes were identified from the interview data in relation to the questions identified in the evaluation framework.
  - The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data was synthesized to formulate findings in relation to the questions identified in the evaluation framework and conclusions and recommendations developed from them.
- **Phase 4 - Reporting**
  - The findings, conclusions and recommendations were integrated into a draft report. The draft report was presented to MoEST representatives for discussion purposes. This final report takes into account the feedback generated by that discussion.

2.2 Limitations of the Evaluation

The Evaluation Team and MoEST representatives recognized that the evaluation faced several limitations. Principle among these were the limited amount of time and financial resources that could be invested in the evaluation. As a result, the evaluation relied significantly on secondary sources of data (broker reports to MoEST, etc.) and was not able to survey clients at all.

Although the Evaluation Team found no reason to question the reliability of the secondary sources of data, the data required to answer some evaluation questions was lacking. In such cases, there was neither the time nor the financial resources available to collect that data from primary data sources. For example, there is no tracking information on the number of clients who do not complete the WBT program or on the reason(s) for their non-completion.

In addition, the opportunity to draw definitive conclusions to several of the evaluation questions (e.g. those focusing around program impact) were tempered by the fact that Phase 3 of the program was only one-third completed at the time of the evaluation. Nevertheless, given the breadth and depth of the data that was collected in the allotted timeframe (May-June 1997), the Evaluation Team believes that the evaluation was successful in achieving its objectives despite the limitations.

3. Findings and Conclusions Related to the Evaluation Framework

3.1 Introduction

This section links the evaluation findings to the major questions of the evaluation framework, draws conclusions from the findings, and makes recommendations based on those conclusions. The questions, findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented for each evaluation question. Each section presents findings related to the prototypes as well as findings related to the Brokerage Model.

3.2 Program Delivery

Q1. Are the equity group and youth targets being met?

Findings (Prototypes)

The prototype phase placed 1,115 clients, exceeding its placement target by 115 (see Appendix 1 - Table 1). There were no equity targets set for the Prototype contracts and contractors were not required to record equity indicators. However, the Remple Formative Evaluation Survey showed the following equity placements for prototypes:

EQUITY GROUP	PLACEMENTS
Youth (19-24)	19.1%
Women	57.7%
Aboriginal	2.3%
Disability	14.6%
Visible Minority	12.9%

The Final Prototype Reports supported the notion that employers are generally blind to equity groups, including age, gender, disability, and family status. As a rule, employers are seeking the attitudes and motivational attributes that will help their businesses grow and that will retain and expand their customer base.

Findings (Brokerage)

The regional implementation phase of the WBT program has placed 1,796 clients as of May 31, 1997, a figure approaching half of its overall placement target of 3,651 (see Table 2). Within those placements, the following equity group targets have been attained (see Table 3 for additional details):

GROUP	LEVEL ATTAINED	TARGET
Youth (19-24)	31%	50%
Women	41%	52%
Aboriginal	3%	3%
Disability	3%	13%
Visible Minority	7%	n/a
Single Parents	15%	26%
Other	19%	n/a

NOTE: These are the totals. For a breakdown by brokers and by regions see Tables 3.1 and 3.2 in the Appendix I - Tables.

A discrepancy between brokers was noted for attainment of equity group targets (see Table 3). The broker (OLA) who had previously delivered youth-related programs, drew on their experience for referrals and showed higher attainment of the clientele target group.

Brokers also reported that the key driver of the program was the matching of clients with employer requirements which, in effect, made the program equity blind. Other government programs and WBT pilot projects targeting specific equity groups competed with access to referrals to the WBT program. Interview data also indicated that lack of specific guidelines for recording equity group placements confounds the accuracy of reporting on this issue (i.e. some brokers place clients in a single category, others in multiple categories, or allow the client to self-select a category).

Some brokers reported action plans to attain equity group targets in the future (e.g. select and focus recruitment efforts on equity group clients from the recently acquired list of IARs and to contact organizations working with specific equity groups for referrals).

Conclusions/Recommendations

The Brokerage Model is proving itself very effective in achieving its overall placement targets, particularly in considering that the reporting period includes the start-up period.

Broker reports indicate that attainment of targets for the various equity groups are not being met by the program as a whole, but that some individual brokers are meeting them. Non-standardized reporting procedures, the degree to which a broker had previous experience with specific equity groups, and competition from other programs could account in large part for the program's apparent under-attainment of targets, and for the discrepancies between brokers in meeting these targets.

It is recommended that:

1. The MoEST develop guidelines to standardize the recording and reporting of clients in equity groups.
2. Brokers be requested to submit action plans for meeting their equity group targets, including contacts they will make with organizations working with specific equity groups for referrals and plans for strategic use of the recently supplied list of IARs.
3. MoEST monitor brokers' action plans for meeting their equity group targets.

Q2. What is the role of the Program Supports in WBT?

Findings (Prototypes)

872 clients received supports (see Table 4), mainly for transportation costs (e.g. bus passes).

$122,426 was spent on program supports.

The average cost per participant receiving program support was $140.39.

It is noted that in one of the prototypes (the BC Manufacturing Association), the clients were already receiving supports from their community organizations; therefore, none was needed. Two of the five prototypes did not track the number of clients receiving supports, as it was not required in the contract. In addition, the number of program completers and non-completers receiving supports was not tracked in the prototype projects (see Table 4).

Findings (Brokerage Model)

As of April 30, 1997 (see Table 5):

- 1,187 clients received program support for transportation costs and pre-employment needs.
- $56,150.55 was spent on program supports (program supports eligible is $330,500 or $250 per placement).
- Average cost per participant receiving program support is $47.30.

Brokers reported that they did not emphasize the promotion of program supports, given that only $250 per placement was available, but that it could be accessed in the pre-employment period by all program participants who requested it. As a result, brokers are acting on a concern to conserve program supports to meet participants' needs for the length of the program. Brokers report the amount and support expense categories (transportation, haircuts, etc.) assist in the attainment of program objectives and are not a constraint on IAR recruitment.

Data on the number of completions and drop outs will not be available for a further 10 months, when the first placements complete their first year of employment.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Access to program supports for transportation, haircuts and other pre-employment needs appears to continue to be important for some participants in the pre-employment period. Current levels of participant program support appear to be adequate, and the categories on which support may be spent seem suitable and supportive of program objectives.

It is noted that more participants are receiving program supports in the third WBT phase than in the second, although the amounts expended per client in the third phase is lower. The brokers' explanation of this is plausible, and the smaller overall expenditures do not appear to represent a constraint on client recruitment.

As participants reach completion of their terms in Phase 3, data will become available (related to the number of participants completing or dropping out of the program, and the causes for non-completions) that will inform policy decision making around supports in a more definitive manner.

It is recommended that:

1. Current levels of program supports and associated expense categories remain unchanged.
2. Brokers be requested to track the numbers of non-completions and the reasons for non-completions.

Q3a. How is the training credit utilized?

Findings (Prototypes)

Approximately 194 existing employees were trained along with the new employees (see Table 6).

From the Final Prototype Reports, contractors reported that employers were generally pleased with the idea of the training credit and agreed it was a better method than the old wage subsidy. They were positive about the possibility of being able to train employees already on the job as well as new ones. Despite the fact that employers only used anywhere from 5%-27% of the training credit to train existing employees, it was widely viewed that the training credit was the most forward thinking aspect of the program.

It should be noted that the percentages are approximate since a portion of the allocated Training Credits is still being claimed. The kind of training (e.g. up-front, on-the-job, off site, or supervisory) and total amounts were not available.

Findings (Brokerage Model)

As of April 30, 1997 (see Table 7):

- 22% of Training Credit allocated was used to offset supervision costs.
- 63% of Training Credit allocated was used for training IAR clients.
- 15% of Training Credit allocated was used for training existing employees.
- 250 existing employees were being trained.

However, only 12% of the Training Credit allocated was actually spent as of April 30, 1997.

Brokers report that the proportion of funds expended on Training Credits to date is relatively low due to the following:

- Most placements are only in their first or second month.
- Payments are made to employers only on the receipt of an invoice.
- In some sectors, such as tourism, most of the training will be carried out at a later date.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The brokers' explanation of why a relatively low proportion of the Training Credit has been used to date is acceptable. The committed amount for the placements made can be expected to be fully expended over the course of the next 10 months.

Q3b. Are employers using the training credit to train existing employees? Why or why not?

Findings (Prototype)

The 1996 Prototype Formative Evaluation surveyed 64 employers. When asked for the main reasons for employer participation in the WBT program:

- 6% said it was to help our staff/professional development
- 16% said it was to offset training costs
- 45% said they were looking for access to qualified employees.

When asked what the Training Credit was used for:

- 52% used the Training Credit for IARs only
- 11% used the Training Credit for IARs and others
- 12% used the Training Credit for IARs, others and supervisors
- 25% don't know or have no opinion.

Of the employers who used the Training Credit to train existing employees:

- 7% used more than half of the Training Credit to train existing employees
- 13% used a third of the Training Credit to train existing employees
- 20% used less than one fifth of the Training Credit to train existing employees
- 60% don't know about the Training Credit.

Only about 10% of the employers surveyed used the program to train other employees. However, 69% agreed or strongly agreed that the WBT program promotes an employer-based training culture.

Findings (Brokerage Model)

In a survey of 15 employers (which included 3 employers from each broker), those employers who used the Training Credit for training existing employees used it for training supervisory and/or management staff. This training generally included both college and training on-the-job methods of delivery.

Those employers who did not use the Training Credit for training existing employees did so because :

- employers considered the WBT clients the priority users of the Training Credit, or
- such training wasn't required, or
- work patterns made training for this group problematic, or
- employers were not aware this type of training was possible through the use of the Training Credit.

Conclusion

There is some evidence which suggests the development of a training culture is occurring in the work place. The percentage of training credit used for training existing employees has increased from 10% in the prototypes to 15% in the broker delivery model. Brokers believe that it takes time to build a training culture, but this is beginning to happen. In the first six months of the broker delivery model, 250 existing employees are being trained. This could occur more frequently as employers and trainees become better established in the program.

3.3 Program Impact

Prior to addressing the specific evaluation framework questions on program impact, the Evaluators believe it is worth reiterating the finding noted in Section 3.2 (Program Delivery), Question 1 as it speaks equally to program impact and program delivery. That is, that the WBT program exceeded its placement target by approximately 10% in the prototype phase and is fully on track to meet the overall number of placements targeted for the regional implementation phase. This finding provides a useful context for the consideration of the following findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Q1. Are WBT clients achieving attachment to the workforce after placement?

Findings (Prototypes)

Completion dates for WBT clients vary by prototype. Some prototypes ended as early as October 1996, others as late as March 1997, and one prototype contract, the BC Manufacturing Association, was extended to December 1997. The number of clients completing the program depends on the start-date of employment.

MoEST reported in a September 1996 Treasury Board Submission that, of the placements in the prototype projects, 83% of the participants were still employed as of September 1996. The number of participants continuing employment after one year, with the same or new employer, is impossible to determine until all the placements have ended their one-year term, which may be as early as March 1998.

The names, social insurance numbers, and start-dates of employment for all prototype placements have been given to the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) to determine if the clients are still on the GAIN system as a first step in assessing the degree of participant attachment to the workforce.

Findings (Brokerage Model)

The data for this question is not yet available because clients are in the initial months of a one-year placement.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a follow-up survey be conducted of the IAR clients from the prototype projects, to assess the degree of participant attachment to the workforce after completion of their placement.

Q2. What types of jobs are WBT clients placed in?

Findings (Prototypes)

Table 8 outlines the types of work performed (by job type, sector of employment and percentage of clients placed in those sectors), the average hours worked per week, and the average hourly wage for the prototype projects.

Placements of clients ranged across all occupational categories and industries. The average wage for prototype-employed clients ranges from $8.63 to $9.96 per hour. Wages varied considerably, ranging from $7 to $35 per hour.

It should be noted that prototype contractors were not required to track employment sectors. The numbers are estimates in some cases.

Findings (Brokerage Model)

Table 9 outlines the types of work performed (by job type, sector of employment and percentage of clients placed in those sectors), the average hours worked per week, and the average hourly wage for the Brokerage Model.

Placements of clients for the first six months of the Brokerage Model ranged across all occupational categories and industries. The average wage for broker-employed clients ranges from $7.57 to $9.54. Wages ranged from $7 to $26 per hour. In the case of the tourism industry, clients can make $25 an hour in tips alone.

Conclusion

WBT participants are being placed in jobs across a wide range of economic sectors. The largest proportion of clients have been placed in sales and service type jobs, followed by those categorized as business, finance and administration.

Q3. Are WBT clients acquiring marketable skills?

Findings (Prototypes)

The Final Prototype Reports and the 1996 Prototype Formative Evaluation Report all confirmed that the employers and clients complied with training plans. In the Remple Report, 73% of the employers surveyed said that IAR employees reached the skill development targets identified in their training plans. The employers, IAR clients, and contractors all perceived the training plan as a binding document that supports the trainee and guides the delivery of WBT.

Findings (Brokerage Model)

The Evaluation Team defined the acquisition of marketable skills by WBT clients as "successful completion of the training plan developed with the employer, WBT client and broker". That is, if the WBT client successfully completed the training plan components, he/she would be able to carry out

effectively a certain function and/or role in the employer's organization, and could be deemed by that employer to have "marketable skills".

In order to determine the degree of success in development of marketable skills/completion of training plans, the Evaluation Team examined the following:

- the method of training plan development
- the use and implementation of training standards in these plans
- the monitoring of these training plans
- the assessment of skill acquisition at the completion of the training.

Brokers develop training plans with employers and clients and, when external training is required, representatives of these training institutions are also included in this process. Brokers generally consider the following elements when developing the training plan:

- employer needs
- client skill requirements, career goals and learning style
- training course availability
- internal training capacity and/or external capacity.

Brokers vary in their use of training standards, and most rely on the employers to determine the standard pertinent to their needs. Two brokers used industry standards where possible. Where training institutions were used, brokers relied on standards set by these institutions.

Brokers generally monitored the implementation of these training standards in two ways: through monthly visits or calls with the employer and client (and with training institutions where applicable), and through sign off on invoices by both employer and client confirming that satisfactory training had occurred.

Brokers generally assess the client skill acquisition and training success at the end of work placements in two ways: by ensuring the level of employer satisfaction and by ensuring training certification from institutions (where appropriate).

Conclusion

Data from brokers generally indicated that WBT clients are acquiring marketable skills, if marketable skills are defined as successful completion of training plans. ("Success" is determined by employers and, where applicable, is based on industry training standards and/or training institution certification.)

4. Other Related Program Issues

4.1 Program Policy Issues

4.1.1 Definition of "Job Readiness"

Following the prototype phase, the Remple Report noted the lack of a consistent definition of "job readiness" and recommended a common definition.

Data from the brokerage phase also indicates that brokers work with varying definitions of job readiness. Two brokers use the Conference Board's "Employability Skills Profile", one uses their industry employee profile, the others use definitions as outlined by employers. In their respective definitions virtually all brokers recognize that employers generally seek employees with positive work attitudes and work ethics who can be trained in the required skills.

It is recommended that the "Employability Skills Profile" be used as a model because these are skills that will affect the client's ability to work. The profile has been adopted by the Provincial Government in the *Training for What?* document produced by the BC Labour Force Development Board.

4.1.2 Skill Assessment of Clients

All brokers reported that clients had not received a comprehensive skills assessment prior to being referred or recruited to the WBT program. Brokers reported that their own use of client skill assessment methods varied; all required some form of self-assessment; all carried out some form of interview and reference check system, and two carried out somewhat more detailed diagnostic screening sessions. Brokers indicated in fact that the link between the Assessment, Counseling and Referral (ACR), Assisted Job Search (AJS) and Community Employment Training (CET) program functions and the WBT program was not functioning effectively.

The Brokerage Model is based on the assumption that skills assessment and job readiness training and counseling would be delivered by local CET providers or AJS programs contracted by the Province. However, some brokers have chosen to use some of their resources to provide pre-placement or up-front orientation preparation training to accepted participants (VIATeC and COTA). Two out of five brokers (OLA and ASPECT) do not have the resources or capacity to conduct a comprehensive skills assessment for clients; but if job readiness barriers are detected, the client will be referred to other programs or assessment services. Three out of five brokers (Horizon College, VIATeC and COTA) perform limited skills assessment such as evaluating aptitude, experience and training on the basis of observation, the client's resume, references and their interview responses.

However, even with the brokers that provide limited skill assessment, and particularly in relation to brokers that do not provide any skill assessment, this lack of capacity to provide comprehensive skill assessment services limits the potential number of applicants to the program and does not ensure that all applicants will possess basic employability skills.

It is recommended that resources for skills assessment capacity be built into every WBT model. Flexibility should be given to brokers to develop up-front orientation preparation training adapted to the industry or sector.

4.1.3 The Focus on Full-Time Employment

Data from the Brokerage Model phase indicates that the focus on full-time employment does not appear to hinder the recruitment of IAR clients. In most cases, clients would rather not require IA but need a full-time job to leave IA. Under the current model, there is a flexibility that allows clients to work part-time as they look for full-time work, or to develop a training plan to help the client work towards full-time employment with an employer. This part-time phase is often a natural progression in the WBT clients' work experience as they make themselves valuable as employees, and as employers gain confidence in employees' abilities. Since part-time employment is eligible if it moves the client off IA or leads to full-time employment, the full-time requirement has generally not deterred any clients seriously interested in working.

There is, however, one exception to this principle. Brokers noted that, particularly in non-urban areas, there is a greater incidence of part-time or seasonal jobs. The current focus on full-time employment opportunities eliminates a large number of potential employment opportunities in these areas, which include large portions of British Columbia outside the lower mainland and lower Vancouver Island.

It is recommended that MoEST continue to focus on full-time employment, but also consistently define full-time and part-time work. Further it is recommended that part-time and seasonal employment be considered in specific rural areas where significant numbers of job opportunities fall into this category of employment.

4.1.4 Self-Employment, Contract Work, and Commission-Based Work

Under the current Brokerage phase, clients are not eligible for WBT if they are self-employed, or if they are employed by employers who contract out or who provide commission-based employment. Three out of five brokers noted that the lack of eligibility of these contract or commission-based jobs hinders the success of the program. For example, the current model makes placement difficult for professionally trained or technically trained specialists (e.g., engineers, software/computer technicians) whose employment opportunities are generally contract positions, and for those who are able to undertake commission sales. Typically this type of WBT client might be able to get a full-time one-year contract, but only after satisfactorily completing a 3 or 6 month project contract.

Since employers are increasingly contracting out work (e.g., primary industries, silviculture, universities, government, computer programmers, desktop publishers, etc.) and more jobs are of an itinerant nature, MoEST should consider widening eligibility to include contract work and commission-based work in other appropriate program areas which address these needs.

4.1.5 Eligibility Rules Related to Time on Income Assistance

Generally, brokers report that the motivation level of IARs is inversely proportionate to the length of time on IA. The work world can be a frightening place for someone who has been dependent on the "IA system" for a long time. Three out of the five brokers believe that the eligibility rules have an impact on their ability to place clients. The longer clients are on IA, the more outdated their skills and prior experience appear to employers. Also, motivation and basic employability skills ("readiness") suffer when clients are out of the labour force for extended periods.

At the inception of the WBT contracts, brokers were advised that after March 31, 1997 only clients eligible for Phase 3 programs under YW/WtW (i.e., those completing 9 months of job search) would be eligible for WBT. Subsequently, the 4-month eligibility rule was extended for two successive months (April and May) since brokers prefer a 4-month eligibility standard.

It is recommended that MoEST extend the 4-month eligibility rule for WBT to the end of August 1997 – in effect, for the balance of the brokers' placements, as all brokers expect to complete their placements by September 1997.

4.2 Program Design

4.2.1 Identification of Growth Sector Labour Market Needs

Brokers reported that they identified job opportunities in growth sectors of the labour market in a variety of ways, including:

- Most make contact with business associations and/or Chambers of Commerce that lead to identification of specific employers with job opportunities.
- Most use some form of direct mail and phone contact with employers in a given community/region.
- Two brokers contact community organizations and groups with a knowledge of employment opportunities.
- One broker has detailed knowledge of employers in a specific sector which allowed brokers to understand which sectoral employers have job openings.
- Some brokers use a variety of labour market information, including HRDC information and local job advertisements.

4.2.2 Client Support

Brokers noted that client support is crucial in the initial stages of employment. The earlier and the more proactive the contacts with clients and employers, the better likelihood of dealing with problem situations and preventing breakdowns in the employer/client relationship.

Brokers' definitions of "client support" vary, but at a minimum include monthly visits or telephone calls with employers, clients, and trainers or training institutions (when appropriate). Some brokers also provide drop-in facilities with office facilities. One broker assists the employer and client in the performance appraisal of the client. Another broker provides a train-the-trainer session for employers.

Another key component of client support is the pre-employment or up-front training. Only two brokers focus on up-front training. Based on demand, participant ability level and interest, the up-front training was designed to provide IARs with sufficient motivation, tools and skills to prepare for the workplace of the 90's. The training places emphasis on the needs of the clients (i.e. based on individual needs and occupational goals) and the targeted business sector. Up-front training, whether it is formal or informal, may be necessary for some clients who need more preparation or coaching prior to integration into the workforce.

All brokers indicate that client support is a most critical element to the success of the WBT program.

It is recommended that broker contracts negotiated in the future allow for an increase in the amount of ongoing support (e.g. touchback, coaching and up-front training) for the clients during their employment and training experience. Operational necessities for ongoing support should be accommodated in these contracts.

4.3 Program Operations

Overhead Costs

Three out of five brokers felt funding for overhead costs was not adequate. They attribute this to additional costs for recruitment of job-ready clients (including advertising, facilities, labour costs, travel, software development), and competition with federal "targeted wage subsidy" programs. Those brokers who reported that overhead costs were adequate also discovered that it does take a significant investment in staff, support, and communication resources to adequately service the smaller communities.

Since there are too many items lumped into overhead costs, we recommend that MoEST review overhead costs, particularly those related to client recruitment, prior to the next contracting process to determine the appropriate level of overhead costs required. It is important to redefine what is overhead costs, what is program or client support, and what is up-front training. This will enhance the Treasury Board's decision making process.

4.4 Program Roles and Responsibilities

Relationships Between Brokers, Headquarters and Field Staff

Currently brokers contract with Headquarters for delivery of a specified number of placements, and then contract with local delivery agents. An important element is the relationship between local delivery agents and local MoEST field staff who can best assist with referrals, eligibility checking, and on the spot monitoring.

Initially one FTE per region was allocated as a WBT coordinator. Following staff reductions this position is no longer full time, although all regions are working to ensure some resources are devoted to WBT.

It is recommended that MoEST devote sufficient resources, both at headquarters and regionally, to manage the WBT contracts, address policy issues, collect evaluation data, and serve as an effective interface between complementary programs. This can be achieved by:

- Development of consistent policies in the administration of the WBT program across the province through the development of a revised WBT Policy Manual.
- Provision of an integrated program framework that can link to all employability program facets (ACR, AJS, Job Readiness, Basic Education, WBT, etc.) for the benefit of the client, Ministries staff, and brokers. This integrated program framework could include provision of peer and mentor coaching services for clients by an existing contractor or a new contractor, or equivalent services from trained Ministry personnel.
- Development of an effective Ministry data collection methodology to capture data from brokers electronically – so that brokers are not faced with custom data requests from various Ministry staff on an ad-hoc basis.
- Consistent commitment to all components of employability programs, from intake through to WBT provision, at all Ministry levels.
- The Regional Management Committees should be better linked to the Provincial Management Committee. One option would be to invite the Chairs of the Regional Management Committees to participate in provincial level meetings (as observers or participants) to ensure Regional Committees are aware of key decisions and information about WBT.

5. Summary Conclusions

WBT Models: Overview

WBT models have been developed from the pilots and prototypes. Under the current WBT program, there are four different models being used, each of which is developed and serviced by one of the brokers and is delivered by a range of sub-contracted delivery agents under contact to the brokers.

In summary, the WBT brokerage models have a number of important positive characteristics to date:

- trends indicate that these models will achieve their targeted number of placements
- WBT brokers are able to provide a range of services for employers including:
  - recruitment and matching of IARs with appropriate employers
  - facilitation of preparation of IARs for employment where appropriate
  - facilitation of development and implementation of a training plan for IARs
  - provision of support to IARs during their year long placement
- WBT brokers are able to identify and contact potential employers in a variety of ways, using a generally flexible approach that is appropriate for different geographic and sectoral areas in British Columbia

Prototype Phase

The Prototype phase placed 1115 clients, exceeding its target by approximately 10%. As of September 1996, 83% of these placements were still employed.

Brokerage Model Phase

Overall, even though Phase 3 (the Brokerage Model Phase) of the WBT program is only approximately one third completed, a number of achievements have been realized to date:

- 1,796 clients (or almost half of the overall placement targets of 3,651) have been placed as of May 31, 1997. Current trends indicate that overall placement targets can be met.
- Clients are being placed across the range of occupational categories and industries.
- Salaries range from $7.00 per hour to $26.00 per hour.
- Clients are acquiring marketable skills.
- The program meets employers' needs by providing pre-screened, candidates with positive attitudes and work ethics, who can be trained in required skills.
- All jobs offer training that lets clients earn an income while they improve their skills.
- 250 existing employees from participating employers were being trained.
- Program support for pre-employment needs is adequate.

6. Summary of Recommendations

There are a range of issues related to the current phase of the WBT program that should be addressed/resolved in the future within the following three timeframes:

- in the immediate future
- at the time of the next broker contract negotiation
- in the longer term

Immediate Future:

- Equity placement results are, in some cases, below targets, and measures to address this should be monitored closely. Standard reporting guidelines for reporting equity group clients should be developed.
- The number of and reasons for non-completions should be tracked by brokers.
- Follow-up surveys of IAR clients should be conducted to assess the degree of participant attachment to the workplace.
- A common definition of job readiness should be used.
- Full-time employment should continue to be the focus of the WBT program, but full-time work and part-time work leading to full-time work should be clearly defined.
- Adequate resources should be devoted at MoEST headquarters and regions to manage the WBT program policy and interface issues. This can be achieved by:
    - Development of a revised WBT Policy Manual;
    - Provision of an integrated program framework that can link to all employability program facets for the benefit of the client, Ministries staff, and brokers;
    - Development of an effective Ministry data collection methodology to capture data from brokers electronically;
    - Consistent commitment to all components of employability programs, from intake through to WBT provision, at all Ministry levels; and
    - Improved linkages between the Regional Management Committees and the Provincial Management Committee.
- Extension of the 4-month eligibility rule for WBT for the balance of the brokers' placements.

Next Contract Negotiation:

- Resources for provision skill assessment of WBT participants should be built into every WBT model.
- Increased resources for client support (touchback, coaching, and up-front training) should be accommodated in the next set of contracts.
- A new eligibility rule (i.e. time on IA) for WBT program participants should be negotiated.
- Overhead costs should be reviewed and clearly defined, particularly those related to client recruitment, to determine the appropriate level of overhead costs required.

Longer Term:

- Contract and commission-based work should be examined for consideration in this program or in other more appropriate programs.
- Placements in part-time and seasonal employment should be considered in specific rural areas where significant numbers of job opportunities fall into this category of employment.

Appendix I - Tables

Table 1 - Placement Results From WBT Prototypes

PROTOTYPES	APPLICANTS ACCEPTED INTO PROGRAM	PLACEMENT TARGET	ACTUAL PLACEMENTS	% OF PLACEMENT TARGET MET	% STILL EMPLOYED	REGION COVERED
VIATeC *Community At Work*	417	350	255	73%	90%	Greater Victoria and Nanaimo
OLA *BC Works*	400	200	234	117%	80%	Lower Mainland
Horizon *WBT*	407	100	135	135%	86%	Lower Mainland
PRIT *Destinations I*	675	300	429	143%	83%	Vancouver Island and Lower Mainland
BCMA	239	50	62	124%	74%	Lower Mainland
TOTALS	**2138**	**1000**	**1115**	**112%**	**83%**	

Data Source: Final Prototype Reports, Stan Remple Evaluation, and MoEST documents.

NOTES:

- PRIT's "Actual Placements" included 54 multiple placements for same clients (i.e., quit or terminated but later re-employed).
- Horizon's "Actual Placements" includes 11 multiple placements for same clients (i.e., quit or terminated but later re-employed).
- BCMA's contract extended to Dec.31/97 - placement figure as of April 30, 1997.
- Full time employment is defined as an average of 35 hours per week for a minimum of 12 months (9 months for PRIT).
- "Placements" are defined as full-time jobs or part-time jobs leading to full-time jobs.
- "Accepted" is defined as recommended by a Training Consultant or Financial Assistance Worker or had an interview with the Brokers.

Table 2 - Placement Results By Brokers As Of April 30 & May 31, 1997

PROTOTYPES	APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS OF 04/30	CONTRACTED TO PLACE	PLACEMENTS AS OF 04/30	PLACEMENTS AS OF 05/31	% OF PLACEMENT TARGET MET
VIATeC *Business Works*	1204	750	239	278	37%
OLA *BC Works*	1158	600	294	355	59%
Horizon College *Connections*	362	300	43	67	22%
COTA *Destinations II*	1191	1001	246	435	43%
ASPECT *Training Works*	1882	1000	500	661	66%
TOTALS	**5797**	**3651**	**1322**	**1796**	**49%**

Data Source: Quarterly HQ Reports, Monthly Regional Reports, and Monthly Financial Reports.

NOTES:

- Full time employment is defined as 30 hours per week for a minimum of 12 consecutive months (9 months for COTA).

Table 3 - Equity Placements By Brokers As Of April 30, 1997

BROKERS	PLACEMENT TARGET	TOTAL PLACEMENTS AS OF 04/30	YOUTH (19-24)	WOMEN	ABORIGINAL	DISABILITY	VISIBLE MINORITY	SINGLE PARENT	OTHER
Target			**50%**	**52%***	**3%****	**13%****	**N/A**	**26%***	**N/A**
VIATeC *Business Works*	750	239	41%	31%	4%	3%	7%	20%	23%
COTA *Destinations II*	1001	246	26%	48%	2%	2%	6%	7%	22%
ASPECT *Training Works*	1000	500	23%	38%	3%	4%	5%	22%	31%
OLA *BC Works*	600	294	49%	51%	2%	2%	11%	9%	5%
Horizon College *Connections*	300	41	10%	49%	5%	0%	27%	17%	37%
TOTALS	**3651**	**1320**	**31%**	**41%**	**3%**	**3%**	**7%**	**15%**	**19%**

Data Source: Quarterly HQ Reports

NOTES:

- Brokers agree to do their best to ensure that 50% of the minimum placements as stated above will be youth (19-24).
- Brokers agree to do their best to place the remaining balance to reflect equity characteristics of the source population.

* Representation in total Income Assistant/Youth Works caseload.

** Representation in total British Columbia population.

DISCLAIMER: A client may be recorded in more than one equity group.

Table 3.1 - Equity Placements By Broker, As Of April 30, 1997

Region	Youth (19-24)	Women	Aboriginal	Disability	Visible Minority	Single Parent	Other
VIATeC							
Lower Mainland	24	21	2	2	6	8	19
Vancouver Island	59	42	7	5	8	32	28
TOTAL	**83**	**63**	**9**	**7**	**14**	**40**	**47**
ASPECT							
Fraser Valley	84	147	6	14	18	78	108
Interior	24	29	6	3	7	31	45
North	9	13	3	2	2	2	1
TOTAL	**117**	**189**	**15**	**19**	**27**	**111**	**154**
Horizon College							
Lower Mainland	4	20	2	0	11	7	15
COTA							
Lower Mainland	0	32	2	0	4	7	18
Vancouver Island	36	53	4	4	9	9	9
Fraser Valley	3	10	0	0	1	1	1
Interior	24	24	0	0	0	1	27
TOTAL	**63**	**119**	**6**	**4**	**14**	**18**	**55**
OLA							
Lower Mainland	109	92	2	2	30	10	12
Fraser Valley	6	8	0	0	2	4	0
Interior	10	22	2	0	0	6	2
North	19	28	1	3	0	5	0
TOTAL	**144**	**150**	**5**	**5**	**32**	**25**	**14**

Table 3.2 - Equity Placements by Regions, As of April 30,1 997

Region	Youth (19-24)	Women	Aboriginal	Disability	Visible Minority	Single Parent	Other
Lower Mainland	137	165	8	4	51	32	64
Vancouver Island	95	95	11	9	17	41	37
Fraser Valley	93	165	6	14	21	83	109
Interior	58	75	8	3	7	38	38
North	28	41	8	5	2	7	1
TOTAL	**411**	**541**	**41**	**35**	**98**	**201**	**249**

Data Source: Quarterly HQ Reports

DISCLAIMER: A client may be recorded in more than one equity group.

Table 4 - Prototypes - Role Of Program Supports

PROTOTYPES	# OF CLIENTS RECEIVING SUPPORTS	FINAL PLACEMENTS	TOTAL COST FOR PROGRAM SUPPORTS	COST OF SUPPORTS PER CLIENT	TYPES OF SUPPORTS PROVIDED
VIATeC	n.t.	255	$ 38,986	$153	Bus Passes only
OLA	530	234	$ 45,940	$196	Bus Passes only
Horizon College	342	135	$ 10,000	$ 74	Bus Passes only
PRIT	n.t.	429	$ 27,500	$ 64	Bus Passes only
BCMA	0	62	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTALS	**872**	**1115**	**$ 122,426**	**$ 140**	

Data Source: Final Prototype Reports

NOTES:

- BCMA's contract was extended to Dec. 31/97 -- placement figure as of April 30, 1997.
- BCMA's clients already received special supports from their community organizations.
- n.t.= not tracked
- n/a = not applicable

Table 5 - Brokers - Role Of Program Supports To April 30, 1997

BROKERS	# OF CLIENTS RECEIVING SUPPORTS	# OF CLIENTS PLACED TO APRIL 30/97	PROGRAM SUPPORTS SPENT	PROGRAM SUPPORTS ELIGIBLE	TYPES OF SUPPORTS PROVIDED
VIATeC	40	239	$ 1,817.34	$ 59,750.00	Bus passes, etc.
OLA	217	294	$ 8,249.89	$ 73,500.00	Bus passes, etc.
Horizon College	68	43	$ 2,115.95	$ 10,750.00	Bus passes, etc.
COTA	52	246	$ 8,416.37	$ 61,500.00	Bus passes, etc.
ASPECT	810	500	$ 35,551.00	$ 125,000.00	Bus passes, etc.
TOTALS	**1187**	**1322**	**$ 56,150.55**	**$ 330,500.00**	

Data Source: Quarterly HQ Reports and Monthly Financial Reports

NOTES:

- Types of Supports was expanded to included not only transportation costs, but also pre-employment needs such as haircuts, some clothing items, hygiene products, work boots, etc.

Table 6 - Prototype Training Credit Allocation

PROTOTYPE	% OF TC USED FOR TRAINING WBT CLIENTS	% OF TC USED FOR TRAINING EXISTING EMPLOYEES	# OF EXISTING EMPLOYEES TRAINED
VIATeC	90%	10%	30
OLA	95%	5%	102
Horizon College	73%	27%	30
PRIT	75%	25%	tbd
BCMA	89%	11%	32
TOTAL	**90%**	**10%**	**194**

Data Source: Final Prototype Reports and Remple Report

NOTES:

- tbd = Final count to be determined
- The % figures are approximate. Training credit allocated is still being claimed. Employers have up to one year from hiring date to access training credits.

Table 7 - Broker Training Credit Allocation To April 30, 1997

BROKERS	PARTICIPANT ALLOCATION	SUPERVISORY ALLOCATION	EMPLOYEE ALLOCATION	TOTAL TRAINING CREDIT ALLOCATED TO 04/30	TRAINING CREDIT SPENT TO 04/30	# OF EXISTING EMPLOYEES BEING TRAINED
VIATeC	$ 492,375.00	$ 32,825.00	$131,300.00	$ 656,500.00	$ 87,380.00	85
COTA	$ 748,000.00	$ 374,000.00	$374,000.00	$ 1,496,000.00	$ 22,535.50	n/a
ASPECT	$ 432,170.00	$ 193,477.00	$112,595.00	$ 738,242.00	$109,379.00	102
OLA	$ 997,888.00	$ 334,824.00	$ 15,547.00	$1,348,259.00	$296,287.42	58
Horizon College	$ 3,631.00	$ 1,815.50	$ 1,815.50	$ 7,262.00	$ 2,946.00	5
TOTALS	**$2,674,064.00**	**$ 936,941.50**	**$635,257.50**	**$ 4,246,263.00**	**$ 518,527.92**	**250**
As a % of total alloc.	63%	22%	15%		12%	

Data Source: Quarterly Reports and Monthly Financial Reports

NOTES:

- ASPECT's "Participant Allocation" includes structured on-site training.
- n/a = not available

Table 8 - Types Of Jobs WBT Clients Are Placed In: Prototype

Prototypes	# of Clients Placed	% Employed in Various Sectors by National Occupational Categories (NOC) Grouping										Average # of Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage	Range
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0			
VIATeC	255	8%	2%	6%	4%	4%	61%	10%	1%	3%	1%	37	$ 8.63	$7-$35
OLA	234	18%	11%	1%	4%	3%	27%	21%	2%	11%	2%	37	$ 9.96	$8-$18
Horizon College	135	27%	4%	0%	1%	1%	39%	19%	0%	6%	2%	35	$ 9.44	$7-$19.51
PRIT	429	24%	49%	2%	8%	5%	1%	1%	4%	6%	n/a	35	$ 8.83	$7-$18.75
BCMA	61	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	90%	0%	35	$ 9.46	$7-$16

Data Source: Final Prototype Reports

NOTES:

1= Business, Finance, Administrative
2= Natural/Applied Sciences and Related
3= Health
4= Social Sciences, Education, Government Service and Religion
5= Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport
6= Sales and Service
7= Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators and Related
8= Primary Industry
9= Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities
0= Management

Tourism Sector Grouping (PRIT and COTA)

1= Accommodation
2= Food and Beverage
3= Adventure Tourism
4= Transportation
5= Travel Trade
6= Events and Conferences
7= Attractions
8= Tourism Services
9= Other Related

Prototypes contractors were not required to track employment sectors. The numbers are estimates in some cases.

Table 9 - Types Of Jobs WBT Clients Are Placed in: Brokers

Brokers	# of IARs Placed to April 30/97	% Employed in Various Sectors by National Occupational Categories (NOC) Grouping										Average # of hours worked per week	Average hourly wage	Range
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0			
VIATeC	239	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	71%	8%	3%	14%	0%	35	$ 8.55	$8-$26
COTA	246	24%	36%	13%	2%	2%	0%	2%	6%	14%	n/a	35	$ 7.57	$7-$15.62
ASPECT	500	22%	6%	0%	3%	1%	36%	11%	2%	18%	0%	35	$ 9.54	$8.50-$13.11
OLA	294	7%	1%	2%	5%	9%	53%	11%	2%	9%	1%	37	$ 8.89	$7-$19.61
Horizon College	43	46%	4%	9%	0%	2%	19%	12%	2%	2%	0%	34	$ 8.74	$7-$14.50

Data Source: Quarterly HQ Reports

NOTES:

- n/a = not applicable
- Brokers are required to track employment sectors according to NOC groupings.
- For COTA, sectors are grouped according to tourism sector grouping.
- Brokers were not required to calculate the median hourly wage.
- Brokers are trying to stay away from low paying jobs in order to ensure that clients can make enough money to leave I.A.